1671

True Theory

OF

Missionary Work.

By W. F. WARREN, D.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

BISHOP J. M. THOBURN.

TRUE THEORY

OF

MISSIONARY WORK

BY

W. F. WARREN, D.D.

NEW YORK
PRINTED BY HUNT & EATON
150 FIFTH AVENUE

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Although our Missionary Society was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary when Dr. Warren delivered his remarkable address on the True Missionary Theory, it was still the day of small things among us so far as our missionary work was concerned. The Methodist Episcopal Church has made immense strides since that day, and hence many of the defects in missionary policy which were faithfully pointed out in the address have ceased to exist. This, however, does not lessen, but, on the other hand, increases, the value of the address to the reader of the present day. It marks the progress which has been made, and inspires confidence in those parts of the address which have not yet been translated into accomplished facts. The plea for "living links," that is, for living men and women linking the several churches in America to special fields in foreign lands, attracted attention, but did not meet with much favor, twenty-five years ago. The time was not then fully ripe for so bold a move, but it is otherwise now. The policy has been initiated among several leading denominations, and last year a beginning was made among the Methodists. The policy had been tested, to some extent, it is true, so far as the support of native helpers in foreign lands was concerned, but this had not been done by our churches "as such." The adoption of this policy by even two or three hundred of our leading churches would at a stroke put our missionary finances on a solid footing, and give us a happy deliverance from our present financial stringency.

J. M. Thoburn.

June 1, 1894.

True Theory of Missionary Work.*

Mr. Chairman and Christian Friends:

I propose, with your kind indulgence, to devote the few moments allotted me to a rapid discussion of the true theory of missionary work. Obvious and fundamental as the theme may seem, I cannot learn that it has ever been handled upon this anniversary platform. During all these fifty years our eloquent anniversary orators have been discussing the different aspects of the great cause, and yet, so far as I have been able to carry my investigations, not one of them has undertaken to tell us what God's plan for the conversion of the world is, or how far we are working in conformity with that plan. Indeed, I cannot find that this primary question of all has ever been formally proposed and answered by any of our Methodist speakers or writers either in lecture, dissertation, or extended treatise. Before this audience, therefore, the theme has at least the recommendation of novelty.

Of its importance I surely need not speak. A knowledge of the true theory of missionary work is as essential to missionary success as an acquaintance with the true principles of military science is to suc-

* Address by W. F. Warren, D.D., of the Boston Theological Seminary, delivered at the Missionary Anniversary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Cooper Institute, New York, November 15, 1869—Fiftieth Anniversary of the Missionary Society.

cess in the art of war. We can never expect to conquer the world if we ignore or reject the plans of the campaign laid down by the Great Captain. Hours would be required were we to attempt a full unfoldment and vindication of the whole divine theory, feature by feature; but even a rapid outline statement of it cannot fail to be profitable. We stand to-night on the threshold of a new half century of missionary labor. If our theory of the work is correct, it will heighten our inspiration to know it; if, on the other hand, it is defective, now is the time to readjust our methods and take a fresh start.

What, then, is the true theory of missionary work?

Everybody understands that the great end contemplated by "the missionary enterprise" is the diffusion of the blessings of Christianity throughout the world. Every Christian believes that in one way or another this glorious consummation is one day to be reached. The moment, however, we come to inquire by what agents and methods it is to come about, great confusion is found to exist even in the minds of many otherwise intelligent friends of the cause. In fact, there are no less than five distinct theories of the propagation of Christianity, each of which has had, and to some extent still has, its earnest supporters. According to the first, the great work is to be accomplished by individual propagandists, each acting on his own responsibility; according to the second by the Christian State acting through its military or civil service; according to the third, by the entire Christian community or stock, in virtue of its out-populating and colonizing power; according to the fourth, by voluntary associations of Christian philanthropists, acting

through agents employed for the purpose; while, according to the fifth, it is properly and normally the work of the Church as such, acting through her divinely-instituted ministry.

This great diversity of theory arises, I think, from the fact that in the progress of the Church's history God has availed himself of all these methods of enlarging his kingdom. For several centuries after the close of the Apostolic Age, the chief territorial extensions of the Church came about in the first of these modes, that is, through individual propagandists acting primarily upon their own responsibility. Often through the agency of an individual Christian captive, or converted slave, or Christian princess espoused to a heathen chieftain, the Gospel found entrance into large kingdoms. After that for several centuries, especially during the long alliance between the Western Church and the Roman Empire, her chief territorial acquisitions were through the military and civil power of the Christian State. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries there was a wonderful diffusion of Christianity through the overflow of long pent-up Christian populations colonizing the ends of the earth. In our nineteenth century the grand agency has been the voluntary association, the Missionary Society, acting through its selected agents. The earliest of all propagations of the Gospel, however, those of the Apostolic Age, were effected in none of these just-mentioned methods, but by the Church as such, acting through her own divinely-instituted ministry.

And this, sir, I take to be the true legitimate and normal plan. The work is too vast for individual resources, too urgent to be left to individual caprice. I

would not overlook or undervalue the truly stupendous results which God in earlier centuries permitted some individual propagandists, operating independently, to achieve. On the contrary, I believe that we should dwell more upon these results, and let them be to us, as they were, doubtless, intended to be to all generations, inspiring demonstrations of what God can do through individual human agency. Nevertheless, the divine commission, "Go, disciple all nations," is not addressed to sporadic individuals, to here and there a Coke, a Carey, or an Eliot, but to the Church of Jesus Christ.

The second method of propagating Christianity, the method which relies upon the secular arm, has been, and still is, the favorite method of Rome. No swords have ever extended the domains of the Church so effectually as papal ones, and in the whole storehouse of ecclesiastical literature I know of no more significant and characteristic document than Xavier's famous letter to his king, proposing to make over the entire work of Christianizing India to the civil service. But not exclusively Romish is this theory of evangelization. It was by Greek Catholic swords that Christianity was diffused throughout all Northern Asia. Cromwell, in that wonderful project of his for dividing the world into four grand missionary provinces, and appointing a government bureau of missions, consisting of seven salaried directors and four secretaries, with a revenue of fifty thousand a year to be expended in evangelizing the world, only planned and projected in accordance with the missionary theory of his age. Soon after their acquisition of territory in the East Indies the Dutch secured, by exercises of civil power,

tens of thousands of Protestant converts in those countries. Even our forefathers, in the colonial history of our country, frequently levied taxes upon the citizens at large to support Christian missions among the Indians. The temptation to use the secular arm in diffusing Christianity in British India, and in some other parts of the world, is at the present day very great. Nevertheless, all who remember Christ's solemn declaration, that his kingdom is not of this world, must ever deprecate all such attempts to make converts to Christ either by the bayonet on the one hand, or by civil disabilities on the other.

With respect to the third theory, I grant the existence of the great law, according to which virtuous stocks multiply and fill the earth, while depraved and vicious ones ultimately sink below the conditions of vital replacement and gradually disappear. I remember the promise given and fulfilled to Abraham, that his seed, as a holy one, should become as the stars of heaven and as the sands of the sea. I remember that at the present hour the Christian nations are the holy ones which are spilling over and filling up the unpeopled lands on every side. China might appear an exception to this remark, but the Chinese emigration of the present is due to the removal of long-existing barriers rather than to any recent increase in the population of "the Middle Kingdom." I grant that God's great plan of human redemption undoubtedly includes the beneficent workings of this divine law; but when I remember all this, and grant all this, I also remember that the divine commission of the Church does not read, "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth," but, "Go preach my Gospel."

And this brings us, sir, to the grand characteristic method of our own century—evangelization by means of the Missionary Society acting through agents appointed for the purpose. I call it the characteristic method of the century, for the reason that, on the one hand, not one of the great missionary societies of the world is yet a hundred years old, while, on the other, about all that has been directly done to extend the Redeemer's kingdom during the present century has been done through the agency of such societies. What now shall we say of the theory of missions out of which this institution, unknown to all preceding centuries, has grown?

In several respects it is a correct theory. It certainly was a great improvement upon most of the preceding. It improved upon the first by giving to the feebleness and desultory action of individuals the advantage of numbers, organization, and systematic supervision. It surpassed the second by substituting for its carnal and secular conception of Christianity a spiritual and true one. It improved upon the third by suggesting direct for indirect agencies in the accomplishment of the great work.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that in its first great institutional embodiments, both in England and in this country, this theory was gravely defective.

In the first place it conceived of the missionary function not as a necessary and organic function of the Christian Church, but as an extraneous work of Christian philanthropy. It undertook to carry out the great commission not through the Church which Christ founded, but through an extra-ecclesiastical and irresponsible association.

In the second place, and as a necessary consequence, it transferred to an irresponsible association, whose sole condition of membership was either the payment of a little money or an election by a close corporation, some of the highest and most sacred prerogatives of the Church of Christ. It thus transferred the power to employ, supervise, and govern scores and hundreds of Christ's ministers; the power of settling the terms upon which heathen converts can be admitted to Church fellowship, to Christian baptism, and the Lord's Supper; the power of determining whether and when such converts can be admitted to the office of the Christian ministry; the power of authorizing the organization of churches; and in general the power of ultimately and authoritatively deciding the thousand and one practical questions of mission administration to which the varying circumstances of the work are ever giving birth. All these essential and inalienable prerogatives of Christ's Church were usurped by the institutions which this new theory of Christian missions created.

A third defect necessarily grew out of these, and that was a total lack of safeguards for the preservation of purity of doctrine and a scriptural administration of ecclesiastical discipline. The powers of these self-constituted societies were plenary. A simple majority vote could admit or exclude a sacrament. So far as the organic law of the associations was concerned, their members, and even highest officers, might be Socinians, Universalists, Swedenborgians, or Mormons. It was not required that even the committees who appointed the missionaries should be composed of Christian believers. For aught I can discover, these

committees might be composed of men denying the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the divinity of Christ, the necessity of regeneration, and the certainty of a final judgment. For aught I can learn, any person, whatever his character, or faith, or life, might, at the pleasure of the society, be appointed as a missionary. As to their converts, neither they nor the missionaries were regarded as belonging to any branch of Christ's visible Church until such time as the appropriate missionary society should instruct them to come together and organize a visible Church of their own, with such a covenant of fellowship and form of polity as they themselves might elect. Under such a system there was nothing to secure the evangelical character either of the society itself, or of its employees, or of their converts.

Again, this theory, in its most consistent and effective form, not only repudiates all ecclesiastical supervision over its home societies, its missionaries, and converts, it even attempts, so far as it may, to monopolize for its irresponsible philanthropic associations the entire missionary interest and effort of great branches of the Christian Church. To secure this end the offices of the society are distributed among the different available denominations with a tact which would do honor to the smartest concert leaders in the nation. For the same purpose the leading men in said denominations are honorarily elected life members, directors, and patrons. Formal indorsements and commendations are solicited at all stated meetings of Church Conventions, Synods, and Conferences. Skillful fishermen, in the character of financial agents or corresponding secretaries, are sent out to fish a liv-

ing, and something over, from these different denominational ponds. Nothing is left undone which promises to divert the missionary offerings and interest of the Churches from the exercise of their own appropriate function to the support of these officious organizations. And all this is palmed off upon the Christian public as a masterpiece of Christian catholicity, an earnest of that ultimate unity of the Church for which Christ prayed!

The last stricture which I propose to make upon the theory of missions now under discussion is, that its natural tendency is to produce an impression that contributions to the support of Christian missions are of the nature of *charities*. The work to be supported is not a work of the Church. The agent who pleads for it in the local churches and congregations can only recommend its claims to their Christian impulses. It is not *their work*, any more than a thousand others. Christ has never commanded them to support this, or that, or any such extra-ecclesiastical organization. From the very nature of the case, therefore, the society comes before our congregations as a beggar—a very worthy beggar it may be—a beggar deserving great sympathy and aid; a beggar who will make good use of all we can give him, but, after all, a beggar. He has no rightful and legal claim upon us, nothing but that moral claim which a charitable work must ever have upon all right-minded men and women. The natural and inevitable result is, that the aggregate missionary offerings of the Christian Church of to-day, when compared with what they ought to be, are simply contemptible. The beggar receives "a beggar's portion."

Such, sir, are a few of the defects and mischiefs of this philanthropic-club-theory of Christian missionary work. It ignores the institution which Christ founded for the conquest of the world, and founds a new one to do the same work. It usurps in behalf of its irresponsible juntos a work not its own, an authority not its own, a support not its own. It causes the mass of Christ's ministers to limit their divine call and commission to the already Christianized world, and the mass of Christ's people to turn their lawful tribute into a pitiful almsgiving.

But let me not be unjust. I remember the historical necessity and service of these extraneous and unecclesiastical institutions in uprousing and educating the Churches to a realization of their duty. I do not know that at the time of the founding of the earlier of them the friends of missionary labor could have done better than they did. God has certainly blessed them, both in the work of evangelization, and especially in their reflex action upon the Churches at home. I speak so emphatically of their defects, only because my theme requires me to review their theory in the light of Scripture and experience. So doing, I am compelled to pronounce them theoretically wrong, and *at present* practically mischievous.

I find, Mr. Chairman, that I have spent so much of my time in disposing of false theories and methods that I can say but little of the true. I can only nakedly state the leading principles included in the true theory, without one word of explanation or defense. As such principles I would name the following:

I. The duty of evangelizing the world is the duty not of peculiarly called and providentially indicated

individuals, not of Christian States, not of the total Christian stock, not of associated Christian philanthropists, but of the *Christian Church* as such.

II. The agents preeminently called to perform the work are the ministers of Christ, who, so far as their commission is concerned, are just as truly called to preach to the heathen nations as to Christian ones. "*All* nations" is Christ's word.

III. The appointment of Christian ministers to foreign fields, and their government while there, are as necessarily ecclesiastical acts as the appointment and government of home ones, and should be performed by the same ecclesiastical authorities.

IV. The support of the foreign ministers should be provided for in the same way as that of the home ministers—not by funded endowments, not by the trembling hand of dying testators, not by charitable associations, not by sanctified rafflings and holy "grab bags," not by any system or form of Christian beggary, but by the *local churches* acting in their Church capacity.

V. Converts in foreign fields should be admitted to all privileges and duties of Church membership on precisely the same conditions as home converts, and such foreign members should from the beginning be regarded and treated by the Church, not as orphans, or bastards, or foundlings, but as children beloved, an integral and most interesting portion of the one indivisible family.

Such I understand to be the leading principles of that theory of Christian missions which regards the work as an essential and organic function of the Church as such. Every part of it naturally grows out

of the Scripture conception of the Church and of its work. It exactly corresponds to apostolic practice. It assigns the work to the same hands to which Christ assigned it. It secures right agents, right methods, and right results. It does not necessarily do away with missionary societies, but it transforms them from irresponsible, outside associations into convenient organs of Church administration.

Now, then, with this outline of the true theory of missionary work clearly before our minds, I desire to raise the question, To what extent does the actual missionary policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church correspond with the theory? Let us take up the five leading principles one by one, and inquire how far we are acting in accordance with each. Let none timidly deprecate such an investigation. If our policy is right it will do us good to know it. If it is wrong, the sooner they discover the fact the better.

First, then, I ask, Does the actual missionary policy of our Church proceed upon the principle that the duty of evangelizing the world is the duty of the Church, rather than that of individuals, societies, states, etc.?

I answer unhesitatingly that it does. Not a few of our members, and perhaps some preachers in different parts of the country, still cherish the antiquated notion that the evangelization of the world is a kind of gratuitous charity, the proper work of associated Christian philanthropists; but the present authorized missionary policy of the Church certainly rebukes so false a conception. It was not always so, but at present in our denomination all mission work is Church work. The law of the Church guards its interests at

every point. By the law of the Church it has a place in the business of every administrative organ of the Church, from the Quarterly to the Quadrennial Conference. Every Church officer, from the Sunday school superintendent to the bishop, is officially and by the law of the Church linked to its support. In no other branch of the Christian Church has this fundamental principle of the Scripture theory of missions found so complete an incorporation into the very law and usage of the body.

Second, Does our actual missionary policy proceed upon the principle that the agents preeminently called to missionary labor are the ministers of Christ?

Again I answer, It does. Once we tried the experiment of sending out a colony of laymen with a company of missionaries to the west coast of America, just as our Wesleyan brethren did to the west coast of Africa, but in both cases there was no disposition to repeat the operation. Christian colonization is one thing, Christian mission work quite another. Teachers of both sexes may be indispensable helpers in a Christian mission, but the great work of converting and saving the world must be chiefly wrought by Christian ministers, *preaching the word and feeding the resultant flocks.* This grand principle seems to be fully acknowledged and acted upon in the missionary operations of our Church.

Third, As to the appointment and government of missionaries, our actual policy substantially conforms to the principle demanded by the true theory. From the beginning all appointments have been made by the proper appointing authorities, the bishops. For a time the government of missionaries was involved

in some confusion, but by the action of our last General Conference the position, character, and just rights of the Mission Conferences have been authoritatively and correctly settled. By that action the principle has been indorsed that in our Church, as it respects appointment, privilege, and responsibility, the home and foreign ministers stand upon a common level. It only remains to apply the same principle more thoroughly than it yet has been to those missions where Conferences have not yet been organized.

Fourth, Does our authorized missionary policy devolve the support of missionaries upon the local churches as such?

Originally it did not. Originally the support of our missionaries devolved exclusively upon the Missionary Society as a benevolent association. If I am not misinformed, it was just a quarter of a century from the time of the founding of the Society before the General Conference even authorized annual church collections to be taken in aid of the Society. Since 1852, however, we find in our Discipline a little statement which strikes the keynote of a new dispensation. It reads thus: "The support of missions is committed to the churches, congregations, and societies as such." No more pregnant sentence was ever put into that wonderful little book. It signalized, intentionally or unintentionally, a radical revolution in the entire theory and policy of missionary support in the Methodist Episcopal Church. It took that charge out of the hands of the Missionary Society, to place it, where it belongs, in the hands of the local churches. Theoretically, then, and by the law of the Church, we are right.

But while we are thus theoretically right, are we so practically? Have we, as a Church, fully adjusted our working plans to the principle we have adopted?

For one, I fear we have not. And if I might be allowed to proffer a suggestion in this presence and upon this point, it would be that we more thoroughly apply and practically carry out the great principle which for seventeen years has stood at the head of our disciplinary plan for the support of missions. Do you ask, How? As a general answer I would say, Go up here to St. Paul's Church and say to it, "As many missionaries' salaries as you will become responsible for, so many ministers shall be appointed as *your* missionaries. Their names shall stand alongside your pastor's in the Conference and General Minutes. They shall be placed in correspondence with you. You shall have letters from them to read in your missionary concerts of prayer. You shall be entitled to write to them as your missionaries, and to rejoice in their success as your success." Go to Washington Square and to Bedford Street and say the same thing; go to every church in the land and say, "Raise such a sum this year and you shall have a missionary all your own —Brother Thoburn, it may be, or Brother Parker, or Brother Long, or Brother Maclay, whomever the bishop may assign you. He shall be *your* messenger to the heathen, *your* second preacher, *your* minister at large, *your* embassador for Christ to distant nations. If you cannot compass the full support of a missionary, give us such a sum and you shall have a native preacher or a domestic missionary appointed in the same way. If you are too poor to come up to this point, we will give you a Bible reader, colporteur,

or teacher. We want you to have a direct and immediate agency in the conversion of this world to Christ."

Why, sir, such a proposition, it seems to me, would recreate our embarrassed work in a twinkling. Publish it to the churches to-morrow morning, and you would not have men enough on your list to supply the demand till night. Just look at it. We have but thirty native American missionaries in our entire foreign work. Counting Germans, Danes, Swedes, Africans, everybody, we have but forty-two sent out from the United States. St. Paul's Church could to-day assume the support of one seventh part of the whole company. She could do it without taxing herself any more than in some of the missionary contributions she has already made. And, sir, she would give more than she ever yet has given. All our churches would. There is a mighty inspiration in this personal relation of a Christian flock to a Christian missionary, an inspiration of which we, in common with other Churches, have failed to avail ourselves. Once introduce the plan, and no local church will feel that it has attained its majority and is entitled to take rank in the sisterhood of normal, self-supporting churches, until it has its TWO ministers, one to labor for itself at home, and one to care for its heathen wards. Once successfully inaugurate it, and I should call it a very poor success if at the end of ten years our Church had not an army of A THOUSAND missionaries and helpers preaching Christ in foreign lands. I am no visionary dreamer. I do not merely theorize. The thing has been tried. Our venerable Secretary can tell you of a single country parish in

Germany, not a large one, and certainly far from wealthy, which thus supports more than a dozen missionaries of its own. It has two missionary training schools of its own, and raises from forty to fifty thousand dollars annually for the support of its mission work. That shows what a single parish in a torpid State Church can do. Cannot we do as well? Is it not worth trying? What say these laymen before me? I do not know you, but I do know the laymen of my own Conference, and I venture little in assuring you that if you will let us have them as our missionaries, our local churches in Massachusetts will take care of every American missionary now employed by our Church. Come on, then, churches of the North, South, East, West, there are a thousand of you already able to support a missionary apiece. Say the word and we will move out and take the world.

Our final question touches the relation of foreign converts to the Church. What principle or theory has our Church pursued with respect to these?

It must be confessed, I fear, that in the earlier history of our missions we leaned too much, at times, to that frigid theory of ecclesiastical non-intervention adopted by the first great missionary societies of England and America. Our converts in foreign fields were too often regarded as germs of new indigenous churches in their respective lands, each local society independent of all the others, and free to adopt all, whenever they should become self-supporting, such form of ecclesiastical organization and discipline as they themselves might fancy. Such a view was far enough from Methodistic. It was simply applying the principles of English Independency or American

Congregationalism to the vital accretions of our Church. It was accepting the identical maxim adopted by the London Missionary Society in 1796 and indorsed by the American Board in 1856.

In the case of our European missions this step-motherly view and treatment of our converts was carried further than anywhere else. It was carried to such a pitch that the Methodist societies gathered by our missionaries in Scandinavia, Germany, and Switzerland were not counted as possessing the character of local churches. A man could join one of them, enjoy all its privileges, and fulfill all its requirements, and yet be all the time a regular member of the Lutheran Church, or of the Reformed Church, or of the United Evangelical Church, or any Protestant one to which he might chance to belong. Even as late as my own connection with our mission in Germany nine tenths of our entire membership were, by the theory of the mission, members in good and regular standing, not of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but of the Protestant State Churches of the country. Nor was this simple fact the worst of it. The practice of the mission was in utter and open conflict with its theory. While theoretically these Methodist societies, into which our converts were introduced, were nothing but free associations for mutual improvement inside the pale of the Established Churches, practically they were local Methodist Episcopal churches. Their members were admitted, preached to, furnished with pastoral oversight and with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, governed, tried, expelled according to all the provisions of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church! One hour the convert was

solemnly received into full church membership according to the affecting form of our Liturgy, the next he was informed that membership in these Methodist societies was not incompatible with continued membership in the State Church. At times there would be a tedious and protracted Church trial, carried through with all the disciplinary form and punctilio which Bishop Baker's Handbook could suggest, and resulting apparently in the expulsion of a member from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Alas for their pains! by the theory of the offended Church the poor offender had never been a member! Weep not, however, too sorely for the victim. His bow is doubly stringed. Though as legally expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church as the prescribed disciplinary process can possibly do it, he is still in the bosom of a sister Church, as sound and acceptable a member as ever! He simply returns like a repentant bigamist to his first and legitimate love.

This anomalous and wretched condition of things grew out of an attempt to reform and vitalize the existing State Churches, instead of operating in our own proper Church capacity. That was the first mistake. The second mistake was, that having commenced in that way, we did not either consistently follow out the plan or else drop it altogether. But the farther we went the more difficult it became to do either the one thing or the other. To carry out the plan consistently it was plainly necessary for our missionaries either to join these different State Churches, or else to cease at once the exercise of every properly ministerial function. To drop it altogether was to bring about a rupture with the State Churches and expose

our membership to all the civil disabilities of dissenters, in those States where dissenters were tolerated, and to utter abandonment in all others. The dilemma was a hard one, and could never have arisen but for the reaction which took place after the Revolution of forty-eight, under whose law of universal religious liberty the mission had been commenced. Either horn demanding a substantial abandonment of the whole work, it is not surprising that our missionary authorities hesitated, doubted, procrastinated, hoping and praying for a providential solution.

At length the providential solution came, came as it so often has, in the upheavals of a civil war. The first report of Prussia's needle guns was the signal of our deliverance. The reconstruction of all North Germany under Prussian influence since the war, and the constant liberalization of the South German and Swiss and Scandinavian governments, have rendered the longer continuance of our former relations to the State Churches of those countries absolutely inexcusable. I would not arraign the motives or wisdom of any in suffering so embarrassing a relation to arise; on the contrary, I only wonder that with so unsettled and tentative a missionary policy as our Church originally had, more and worse embarrassments have not arisen. But while the evil originated without fault or dishonesty, it cannot longer be willingly tolerated without both. The case is perfectly clear. If our converts in those countries are *bona fide* members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, our societies *bona fide* societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, then have we no business to operate as a mere voluntary association inside of the Established Churches. If, on the con-

trary, our converts are *not bona fide* members, their societies *not bona fide* societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, then have the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church no right to serve and govern them as such. As a Church we must take one position or the other, and then act in conformity with it. Our uncertain and ambiguous policy in the past has done more to prejudice the Christian public of Europe against us than all that the countless slanderers of Methodism have done and said against us. Against its continuance, so far as it may still be in force, I must solemnly and emphatically protest. Even before the war, when on the ground, I protested, and was by no means alone. And, sir, I want this protest to ring through and through the Church. I want it to reach and arrest the attention of these honored bishops. I want it to stir up these grave and reverend gentlemen of the Missionary Board and General Committee. I want it to tingle in the ears of these ex-members and members expectant of General Conference. I want the whole Methodist Episcopal Church to understand the real status of the larger part of our European membership. The thing must not longer be winked at.

During the month of May, last year, I had a little celebration, all my own. Excuse me, sir, it was not all my own; thousands, I dare say, united in it. The occasion was the action of our General Conference recognizing our Mission Conferences as integral and homogeneous portions of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Most saw in that action simply a settlement of the relation of our missionary ministers to the Church; to me it was the settlement, and the *right*

settlement, of the relation of our foreign converts and their societies to the Church. By that action our Church, before restricted to the limits of this republic, was rendered ecumenical, catholic, universal. Henceforth the world is really "our *parish*." The terms "home" and "foreign" have lost their old significance. Henceforth our mission converts will be no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, brethren beloved. No longer will their societies be regarded as State-Church-Awakening-Committees, or as confraternities of the order of St. John of Epworth. No longer will they be counted by their Methodistic mother as infant congregational churches, burdened with the responsibility of settling the age-long controversies of Christendom respecting ecclesiastical order before they can organize as a part of the visible Church. O, no! Henceforth they are one with us in faith and holy fellowship. In General Conferences to come, brethren from the North and the South, the East and the West, brethren from Africa, Europe, India, China, will clasp hands in Christian greeting, one not only in Christ, but also in the living unity of his Church. Thank God that at length even the last principle of the Scripture theory of missionary work has found acknowledgment among us!

Mr. Chairman, we do well to spend the year in jubilee rejoicings. Fifty years ago, as a Church, we shared the then prevailing misconceptions of the missionary work so completely, that in only one of the five principles did we coincide with what I have ventured to style the true and scriptural theory. Step by step through the long years we steadily approached the true conception, until a few months before the

incoming of the jubilee year, the last General Conference of the period consummated the happy revolution by action which completed the transformation of our Missionary Society into a strictly administrative organ of the Church, and changed our Proselytes of the Gate into Proselytes of Righteousness. Henceforth our theory is right in every point. The man to whom more than to any other this happy revolution is due, I need not name. His form is a familiar one in these anniversary gatherings. His voice has been heard in every portion of the Church. His whitening locks lack not the crown of honor. Never will American Methodism forget to venerate the name and life work of JOHN PRICE DURBIN.

Nor let our rejoicings look backward only; the opening future demands them. The very first year of our new half century is signalized by an episcopal progress around the world. And, what is the more wonderful and significant, it is the first in the world's whole history. Most singular of all, it is under the auspices of the youngest Episcopal Church in the world. Bishop Kingsley's is the proudest ecclesiastical distinction of the century. If spared to complete his tour, his name will have historic conspicuity as the first of his office who ever inspected the Lord's great flock the whole world round. History relates that when the first actual circumnavigator of the globe reported to his king, the king embraced him with delight, elevated him at once to noble rank, and granted him a coat of arms of fit devices in which a globe was bordered with the proud inscription, *Primus me circumdedisti.* Such a reception, such distinctions await our toiling bishop at the hands of Jesus Christ.

He is the first, but others will follow after. The road will soon be milestoned by the towers of Methodist sanctuaries. Conference shall be joined to Conference, until the hemispheres are netted. Already the circling sun shines ever upon Methodism. Yea, upon our American Episcopal Methodism. And by and by, when we and all the Churches of the world shall finally have learned Christ's theory of missions—when every Church of Philippi shall support its traveling Paul—then shall the Gospel be preached no longer by scattered units, but by banded thousands; then shall nations be born in a day, then shall the grand eternal jubilee begin!

BISHOP THOBURN'S BOOKS.

Bishop Thoburn's presence in the United States has given rise to inquiries concerning the several books written by him in recent years. The first on the list is

MY MISSIONARY APPRENTICESHIP,

which was published at the end of Bishop Thoburn's twenty-fifth year of missionary service. It contains the story of his conversion, call to preach, special call to foreign mission field, and the successive steps by which he learned how to do the work of a missionary in India. This book gives many accurate and striking inside views of missionary life, and abounds with personal incidents which make it peculiarly interesting. Five editions of this book have been sold.

12mo. Cloth. $1.20.

MISSIONARY ADDRESSES.

A series of ten lectures on missionary topics, five of them having been delivered before the students of Garrett Biblical Institute, and five before the students of the Boston Theological Seminary. Three editions have been sold, and a fourth is now in press. These addresses should be widely circulated, especially among our young people.

12mo. Cloth. 60 cents.

THE DEACONESS AND HER WORK.

A series of addresses and sermons on leading phases of the deaconess movement. This movement is attracting increased attention among the churches, and Bishop Thoburn can speak with confidence on the subject, having been personally connected with it from the first. The addresses were delivered at various places, East and West, and some of them have attracted wide attention.

12mo. Cloth. 60 cents.

INDIA AND MALAYSIA.

This is the latest and largest of Bishop Thoburn's books, and has attracted wide and favorable notice. It consists of a series of sketches of country, people, and states which make up the great Empire of India, and also treats very clearly of many of the most important phases of modern missionary work. The book maintains the interest of the reader from first to last. It is richly illustrated, and is published in a very attractive style. Several interesting chapters were written by Miss Isabella Thoburn, Bishop Thoburn's sister, and this fact adds much to the value of the book, especially in the eyes of our excellent sisters who are interested in Foreign Missions. The chapters which treat of Malaysia treat of a region which is new to most American readers, and are full of interest.

8vo. Cloth, $2; Half Russia, $2.50; Full Russia, $3.